

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. An absorbent article defining a longitudinal axis, an overall length dimension measured parallel to the longitudinal axis, a transverse axis, first and second longitudinally spaced waist regions, a crotch region which extends between and interconnects the first and second waist regions, an inner surface and an opposite outer surface, the absorbent  
5 article adapted to provide a pant configuration having a waist opening and a pair of leg openings, the absorbent article comprising:
  - an absorbent chassis comprising an absorbent assembly;
  - attachment panels extending transversely outward from the absorbent assembly in the first waist region, the attachment panels having a length dimension that is about 20  
10 percent or greater of the overall length dimension, each attachment panel comprising a nonwoven substrate that extends from the waist opening to one of the leg openings and defines an inner attachment surface; and
  - at least one fastening component disposed in the second waist region on the outer surface, the at least one fastening component comprising a mechanical fastening element  
15 adapted to refastenably engage the inner attachment surfaces;
  - wherein the refastenable engagement of the mechanical fastening element and the inner attachment surfaces maintains the absorbent article in the pant configuration.
2. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the attachment panels comprise an elastomeric material including an elastomeric layer and an inner nonwoven layer, the inner nonwoven layer being gathered by the elastomeric layer.
3. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the attachment panels consist essentially of an elastomeric nonwoven material.
4. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the attachment panels consist of an elastomeric nonwoven material.
5. The absorbent article of claim 4, wherein the elastomeric nonwoven material comprises an elastomeric layer and an inner nonwoven layer, the inner nonwoven layer being gathered by the elastomeric layer.

6. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the sole means for refastenably connecting the first and second waist regions in a pant configuration consists of the inner attachment surfaces in the first waist region and the mechanical fastening elements in the second waist region.
7. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the first and second waist regions are not refastenably connectable other than by the refastenable connection of the mechanical fastening elements and the inner attachment surfaces.
8. The absorbent article of claim 1, further comprising a pair of fastening components disposed in the second waist region on the outer surface, the fastening components comprising hook-type fasteners.
9. An absorbent article defining a longitudinal axis, a transverse axis, front and back longitudinally spaced waist regions, a crotch region which extends between and interconnects the front and back waist regions, an inner surface and an opposite outer surface, the absorbent article adapted to provide a pant configuration having a waist opening and a pair of leg openings, the absorbent article comprising:
- an absorbent chassis comprising a liquid permeable bodyside liner, a liquid impermeable outer cover bonded to the bodyside liner, and an absorbent assembly disposed between the bodyside liner and the outer cover;
  - first and second attachment panels bonded to the absorbent chassis in the back waist region and extending transversely outward from the absorbent chassis, the first and second attachment panels consisting essentially of an elastomeric nonwoven material and having inner attachment surfaces; and
  - at least one fastening component disposed in the front waist region on the outer surface, the at least one fastening component comprising a plurality of engaging elements projecting outward from the outer surface and adapted to refastenably engage the inner attachment surfaces of the attachment panels;
  - wherein the refastenable engagement of the attachment panels to the at least one fastening component maintains the absorbent article in the pant configuration.
10. The absorbent article of claim 9, wherein the attachment panels consist essentially of an elastomeric nonwoven material.

11. The absorbent article of claim 9, wherein the attachment panels consist of an elastomeric nonwoven material.

12. The absorbent article of claim 11, wherein the elastomeric nonwoven material comprises an elastomeric layer and an inner nonwoven layer, the inner nonwoven layer being gathered by the elastomeric layer.

13. The absorbent article of claim 9, wherein the sole means for refastenably connecting the front and back waist regions in a pant configuration consists of the elastomeric nonwoven material in the back waist region and the plurality of engaging elements in the front waist region.

14. The absorbent article of claim 9, wherein the front and back waist regions are not refastenably connectable other than by the refastenable connection of the plurality of engaging elements and the inner attachment surfaces.

15. The absorbent article of claim 9, wherein the absorbent article has an overall length dimension and the attachment panels have a length dimension that is about 20 percent or greater of the overall length dimension.

16. The absorbent article of claim 15, wherein the attachment panels have a length dimension that is about 25 percent or greater of the overall length dimension.

17. The absorbent article of claim 9, further comprising a pair of fastening components disposed in the front waist region on the outer surface, each fastening component having an inner end edge disposed toward one of the leg openings, an opposite outer end edge disposed toward the waist opening, a length dimension that is generally parallel to the longitudinal axis, a width dimension, and a length-to-width ratio of about 5 or greater.

18. The absorbent article of claim 9, further comprising first and second side panels bonded to the absorbent chassis in the front waist region and extending transversely outward from the absorbent assembly, and first and second fastening components disposed on the first and second side panels.

19. An absorbent article defining a longitudinal axis, a transverse axis, front and back longitudinally spaced waist regions, a crotch region which extends between and interconnects the front and back waist regions, an inner surface and an opposite outer surface, the absorbent article adapted to provide a pant configuration having a waist opening and a pair of leg openings, the absorbent article comprising:
- 5 an absorbent chassis comprising a liquid permeable bodyside liner, a liquid impermeable outer cover bonded to the bodyside liner, and an absorbent assembly disposed between the bodyside liner and the outer cover;
- first and second attachment panels extending transversely outward from the absorbent assembly in the back waist region, the first and second attachment panels consisting essentially of an elastomeric nonwoven material and having inner attachment surfaces; and
- 10 at least one fastening component disposed in the front waist region on the outer surface, the at least one fastening component comprising a plurality of engaging elements projecting outward from the outer surface and adapted to refastenably engage the attachment surfaces of the attachment panels;
- 15 wherein the refastenable engagement of the attachment panels to the at least one fastening component maintains the absorbent article in the pant configuration.
20. The absorbent article of claim 19, wherein the attachment panels consist essentially of an elastomeric nonwoven material.
21. The absorbent article of claim 19, wherein the attachment panels consist of an elastomeric nonwoven material.
22. The absorbent article of claim 21, wherein the elastomeric nonwoven material comprises an elastomeric layer and nonwoven layer.
23. The absorbent article of claim 19, wherein the sole means for refastenably connecting the front and back waist regions in a pant configuration consists of the elastomeric nonwoven material in the back waist region and the plurality of engaging elements in the front waist region.
24. The absorbent article of claim 19, wherein the first and second waist regions are not refastenably connectable other than by the refastenable connection of the mechanical fastening elements and the inner attachment surfaces.

25. The absorbent article of claim 19, wherein the absorbent article has an overall length dimension and the attachment panels have a length dimension that is about 20 percent or greater of the overall length dimension.

26. The absorbent article of claim 19, wherein the refastenable engagement of the attachment panels to the at least one fastening component forms refastenable seams that cover about 80 to about 98 percent of the distance between the waist opening and each leg opening.

27. The absorbent article of claim 19, wherein the first and second attachment panels comprise different portions of a single unitary panel member.

28. The absorbent article of claim 27, wherein an elastomeric material is operatively joined to the first and second attachment panels.

29. The absorbent article of claim 27, wherein the attachment panels comprise an inner facing layer, an outer facing layer, and a plurality of elastomeric segments disposed between the inner and outer facing layers.

30. The absorbent article of claim 19, further comprising a pair of fastening components disposed in the front waist region on the outer surface, each fastening component having an inner end edge disposed toward one of the leg openings, an opposite outer end edge disposed toward the waist opening, a length dimension that is  
5 generally parallel to the longitudinal axis, a width dimension, and a length-to-width ratio of about 5 or greater.

31. The absorbent article of claim 19, further comprising first and second side panels extending transversely outward from the absorbent assembly in the front waist region, and first and second fastening components disposed on the first and second side panels.